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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft's punishment

Gentlemen.

I find it remarkable that the government thinks that an appropriate punishment for a convicted monopolist is to effectively increase their sales by a billion dollars and give them free access to markets they had previously been unable to force their way into. If the government isn't going to break the company up and is considering a \$1B fine, I would offer the following suggestion.

1. The \$1B has to be all cash, not one single microsoft product. The money should all be spent buying Apples, Suns, and tech support for non-Microsoft operating systems (getting rid of those microsoft worm, virus, and crash prone IIS machines would probably do the net a world of good). This would give Apple (where microsoft stole most of their really good ideas) a boost. Getting the schools out of the cost cycle associated with microsoft's monopoly inflated prices and into Linux would give them a more virus resistant system and help them in the long run (Linux is about \$75, Windows about \$400 - go figure).
2. Microsoft should be required to make a version of all their software (i.e. MS Office, etc) for all operating systems i.e. Apple , Linux, Unix, Sun OS etc. Most application providers provide versions of their products for various different operating systems but not microsoft. This would force them to make less tightly interlinked software (and would actually improve it's performance) as well as help break the vertical monopoly they currently enjoy.
3. The government is a major purchaser of microsoft operating systems and software. Under normal circumstances, the government will not purchase things that do not conform to standards (IEEE, ANSI, ISO, etc). I cannot think of a single microsoft product that does not violate one standard or another. Indeed, one of their monopolistic strategies has been to make extentions, i.e. modifications to standards, to make them unique to microsoft and, therefore, incompatible with products that do meet the standards. This was the basis of a lawsuit from Sun over Java. Microsoft's response was to eliminate Java from their latest operating application, doubtless figuring that they had adequate muscle to ignore all the applications that use Java. When it comes to microsoft, the government is ignoring their own rules regarding standards compliance. The government should stop doing this. They should tell microsoft that they will not purchase a single MS product that violates a widely accepted standard. I doubt that microsoft could afford to lose the government's business and it would break that monopolistic practice.

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